## REMARKS

In view of the above amendment and following remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the Application.

### Status of the Claims

Claims 10-20 were previously pending.

Claims 10-16, 18 and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103.

Claims 17 and 19 stand objected to.

Claim 10 has been amended.

Claim 21 has been added. No new matter is added.

Upon entry of the amendments, claims 10-21 will be pending.

### Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for the indication that claims 17 and 19 contain allowable subject matter. The claims stand objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claim. Newly added independent claim 21 includes all of the features of previously pending claim 17 and its base claim.

### Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. 103

Claims 10-16, 18 and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,337,465 to Spracklen et al. ("Spracklen") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,736,796 to Price et al. ("Price").

Spracklen describes an interface to connect stations 11 in a network using a shared communication channel 10. See Fig. 1. The interface is coupled to a resident computer at each station to send and receive data over the channel. The data is transferred between the resident computer and the interface via a single-byte input/output port P (Spracklen, column 5, lines 25-30). The interface includes a transmitter TXD and receiver RXD for sending and receiving data, respectively, over the channel. A channel state machine controls the signal state of the interface

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(Spracklen, column 3, lines 51-64). When changing states from idle to receive data, "upon detection of any data on the channel (e.g., the SYNC code of the packet), the channel state machine enters the PACKET state" (column 3, lines 55-58). To transmit data that has been received from the resident computer, the interface operates a number of steps to ensure that the channel 10 is idle. The interface transmits and receives data over the channel 10 via terminals TXD and RXD respectively.

Price describes a "driver 70 having a first voltage source and ground [driving] a transmission line 72 coupled to receiver 71 having a second voltage source and ground" (Price, column 6, lines 16-18, shown in Fig. 4). Price further describes that the separate voltage sources cause a discontinuity of the current path (Price, column 6, lines 18-28).

Independent claim 10 has been amended to specify that the first circuit part includes a "first transmitter circuit part connected to a first transmitter terminal of the first unit [and] a first receiver circuit part connected to a first receiver terminal of the first unit." Claim 10 has been similarly amended regarding the second circuit part. Support for the amendment can be found in the original specification , for example, at paragraphs [0033] and [0039].

Independent claim 10 also recites the "second circuit part being interconnectable with the first circuit part . . . via the reference potential line." Further, "a first signal state of the first receiver terminal is capable of being changed as a function of a signal state of the second transmitter terminal."

Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of Spracklen and Price fails to teach or suggest a first circuit part including "a first transmitter circuit part connected to a first transmitter terminal of the first unit [and] a first receiver circuit part connected to a first receiver terminal of the first unit." Spracklen describes transmission of data between the resident computer and the interface via a single-byte input/output port P. The resident computer of Spracklen does not include a transmitter terminal and receiver terminal. Nor does Price describe a circuit part with both a first transmitter circuit part and first receiver circuit part.

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Applicants furthermore respectfully submit that the combination of Spracklen and Price fail to teach or suggest "a first signal state of the first receiver terminal is capable of being changed as a function of a signal state of the second transmitter terminal." As discussed above, Spracklen does not disclose separate receiver and transmitter terminals of the first and second units. Further, Spracklen's input/output port P of one station is not capable of changing signal states as a function of the signal state of an input/output port P of another station. Spracklen discloses that the channel state machine of the interface will change states upon the detection of a data on the channel 10. However, this is with respect to receiving data from the channel 10 into the interface via terminal RXD. There is no indication that input/output port P changes signal state as a function of data on the channel. This is further supported because the signal state of the input/output ports P is not synchronous with the signal state of the terminals TXD and RXD. For instance, a packet of data from the resident computer is held in a transmitter store in the interface before being transmitted via the channel 10. Accordingly, there is no indication in Spracklen that the signal state of a first receiver terminal of a first unit is capable of changing as a function of second transmitter terminal of a second unit. Nor does Price teach or suggest the deficiencies demonstrated to be missing from Spracklen as discussed above.

Applicants additionally respectfully submit that the combination of Spracklen and Price is improper because there is no motivation to combine the references in the manner asserted by the Examiner. Price describes that a discontinuity is formed when connecting a driver having a first voltage source and ground with a receiver having a second voltage source and ground. Price suggests the use of capacitors "to by-pass each of the supply voltages to ground and to by-pass the supply voltages to each other" (Price, column 6, lines 11-13). Thus, Price specifically teaches away from a second circuit part being interconnectable to a first circuit part via a reference potential line.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons stated above, withdrawal of the rejection to claims 10-16, 18 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) is respectfully requested.
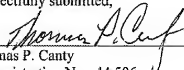
## CONCLUSION

In view of the amendments made and arguments presented, Applicants respectfully submit that the presently pending claims are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

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By _____

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